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apply to Beatrice Portinari by reason of the dates; does he think people began to admire her only after her father's death?

Mr. Butler has pointed out some of these inconsistencies and negligences in the notes, and perhaps as fully as was necessary; not many are likely to use the book who cannot pursue the subject further, and for them the indications in the notes will point out the way to follow. It is also true that even excessive scepticism is rather refreshing after the excessive credulity of half a century since, which lingers still in some quarters; Dean Plumptre even presumes that Dante may have worshipped in Wells cathedral! But none the less is the attitude a false one; to assume that anything said about Dante is false as soon as a hypothetical origin can be found for it that is not inherently foolish and self-contradictory, will some day seem as absurd as the other assumption branded by Mr. Butler, "that anything that it was nice to think Dante had done, he had done, if it could not be proved that he had not done it."

It is this attitude of Scartazzini that makes me regret that Mr. Butler did not write a book of his own instead of translating another man's. Aside from this nothing but good can be said of it. It is clear in plan, full in treatment, and accurate in statement of fact. As to the general interpretation of the symbolism, there can never be unanimity of opinion, and while in my judgment Scartazzini's theory fails in some important particulars, no Dante student can afford to overlook the theory itself nor the arguments by which he supports it. It is needless to say that the translation shows the precision and good judgment to which Mr. Butler has accustomed his readers.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

History of English: A sketch of the origin and development of the English language with examples, down to the present day. By A. C. CHAMPNEYS, M. A., Assistant Master at Marlborough College. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893.

A book planned to serve as an introduction to a subject so vast and difficult as the History of English must necessarily sacrifice some desirable qualities. Exhaustive and scientific treatment must go first, perhaps, but the quality of interest should by an equal law of necessity be preserved. And such has been the result in this sketch of the origin and development of the English language by Mr. Champneys.

When preparing this history the author might have set before him many models and repeated for us a work after the old school, but he has avoided this and has successfully sought to combine all that was best in later designs. Instead of rewriting Mr. Sweet, or condensing Prof. Skeat,—a great temptation, this latter,—he has openly and reasonably borrowed the best from them and others, and allowed the whole to pass through the crucible of his own critical sense of value. So the value of the more scientific, though one-sidedly historical, methods of exposition of English grammar has been appreciated, and at the same time the more problematical questions of philology and petty quibblings of etymology have been set aside. This writer tells the history of English in a narrative form, relating it in a style at once entertaining and instructive. So charmingly has this style been employed that the reader, be he student or not, is bound to follow the story from chapter to chapter, unconscious that the subject deals with the dry bones of philology and is not the most veritable English romance. How has the historian been able to do this?

The history of the English language is essentially the history of Britain; the history of the Britons repelled by the Angles and Saxons, the history of the Angles and Saxons attacked and driven southward by the Danes, the history, finally, of the conquest of all by the Normans. What a contrast to the conquests of the English tongue to-day in America! Here English overwhelms Roman, Celt, Teuton, and what not, without struggle. While relating the history of the country he has deduced the history of the language, summing up at the close of each great invasion the changes and survival of the English. The language is the offspring of conflict and change, and is even now easily susceptible to the influence of its surroundings. Only last May, a

learned body of German teachers was debating whether the English of Liverpool was not purer than that of London. This, too, after eight centuries of development, counting from the Conquest of 1066, in London. This proves one thing for the English of London, aside from the English of the German choice, that it is not fixed, not provincial, but open to all the temporal and local changes that have been wrought in London itself for the past eight hundred years. Pure English means something more than the English of the unadulterated Northerner, just as grammatical English means something more than the mere conformity to the genius of the language. Power, education, wealth and travel have made for English language, if its history be read aright, as much as they have made for English Empire.

The English language, therefore, has always been closely in touch with the history of the English people. This phase of the subject Mr Champneys has successfully emphasized by furnishing data which the most careless reader cannot pass without having received some impressions more or less vivid.

In the first seven chapters, the place of the English among the great Indo-European families is discussed. The term Indo-European, is more significant than Aryan, on the one hand, for this has to be explained and then warned against; or Indo-Germanic, on the other hand, which is a very complimentary word for the people using it. Having now found a place for the English among the Teutonic languages, we are prepared to enter chapter eight, and to enter with the English into Britain. Here the history starts and the first chapters could have been arranged as a preface, though students fail to read prefaces. Old English, before the Norman Conquest, is by force of fate and history Anglo-Saxon. The English began to settle in Britain about 449 A. D., and after all these centuries the different English dialects of to-day correspond more or less to the main divisions of these settlements. From the first there was a struggle for supremacy among the four principal dialects. There were the Kentish and Mercian, the Northumbrian with its Caedmon, the Father of English poetry, and the West Saxon, with Winchester as its capital, the political and literary centre of England under

the reign of Alfred the Great, the royal author, at whose death the literature in English "was far superior to that in any spoken or 'modern' language in Europe." "And yet it is not to the Kentish, Northumbrian or West Saxon, but to the East Midland popular or 'vulgar' English, as altered by contact with the Danes, that our Modern English is mainly due."

Leaving, however, the grander lines of history, there are to be considered the more specific differences among the dialects, and particularly the phonological, inflectional; in a word, all grammatical distinctions of the Anglo-Saxon. The book being elementary is wisely free from technical expressions; but has not the absence of such terms as *ablaut* and *umlaut* impaired the clearness of this part of the work? Instead of using the word *ablaut*, note what a variety of explanatory phrases the author has had to employ: "the second class of perfects consists of those which are formed by a change (graduation) of the vowel of the stem," and, a few lines below, this "vowel-graduation," this "alternation (graduation) of the vowel," etc. In case of the examples just cited, the vowel has probably been changed because of accent and tone, but what about the vowel-change in the noun and adjective? Here the vowel-change is produced by a sound—"a sound just coming to affect a sound before it." This too the author calls "change of vowel," "mutation" or "modification." Thus the beginner is sadly confused by the use of the same nomenclature for an entirely different set of phenomena. Another group of adjectives might have been added to those cited as being affected by this vowel-change. Equally strange is the omission of the most important, (and, in fact, the only West Saxon form, according to Sievers), reduplicated verb in Old English, *heht*. In stating that the oldest English reduplication "seems to have been regularly formed with the diphthong *eo*," and this perhaps developed from *i*, as in *dide*, *dyde*, no intimation is given that vowel-gradation together with reduplication may have affected the forms of the survivals, or that contraction of the reduplication with the radical syllable has caused that two-fold system of vowels found in the perfects of reduplicating verbs. And

can *did* be called "the one obviously reduplicated perfect that has lived down to our day"?

Of course, when Mr. Champneys avers that "no language ever borrows its grammar, the inflexions of its verbs and substantives" he is stating an important feature of English. And in line with this, there has been an interesting discussion over a case of borrowing carried on recently between Profs. Napier and Earle. It is concerning the prevalence of the *s*-plurality in modern English. Prof. Napier deduced from a study of the Chronicle of 1122-31 and the Ormulum that "when two different languages are brought into contact, the influence of one upon the other is first made apparent in the borrowing of words and phrases, and the proportion of such loan-words may, especially during the earlier periods of contact, be taken as a trustworthy gauge of the amount of influence exercised by the one on the other." This principle applied to the two works mentioned would mean that borrowed words and phrases are the first results of influence and that the passive language will adopt these earlier than it will admit flexional change, and therefore in the list of borrowed words decides whether the influence is sufficient to impart a flexional change. The above works have few borrowed words, hence Prof. Napier argues that the influence of French was not sufficient to cause the native *s*-plural to become universal. But Prof. Earle answers, "our *s*-plurality received a strange impulse from the French, especially as illustrated on the pages of the Chronicle," hence he declares himself "unable to pass from the plurals of the time of the Norman Conquest to those of sixty years later and not feel that the change must be due to an external cause."

The period known as Middle English occupies the next four chapters, in which we review the standing of the dialects and literature at the time of the Conquest itself, as well as their rapid fall after the same. In reducing the dialects to the same level, low level, the effect has not been too strongly stated. "West Saxon was no longer the Court language. Winchester was no longer the one capital of England. 'At Easter,' we are told, 'William wore his crown at Winchester, at Pentecost at Westminster, and at mid-winter

(Christmas) at Gloucester.'" So all the dialects are again on equal footing, as it were, and had to start the race anew. We know which won it, the East Midland. Position was everything and the Dane had done good work in preparing the way.

Starting with the East Midland, the author puts us on the right line to trace the origin of our standard English. After the Conquest the Northumbrian was developing into Lowland Scotch, Southern English was becoming more old-fashioned, and West Midland was approaching nearer to the East Midland dialect. "Now, at the middle of the fourteenth century we are approaching the time when one dialect was to become the standard dialect of English. This was certain to happen after the French lost its ascendancy." Chaucer, born and reared a Londoner, wrote the London dialect which was in the main East Midland, with a strong dash of Southern clinging to it. But Chaucer's work was not alone the transmitter of East Midland English into standard English. The Bible translation of Wyclif and his friends was important in establishing the English we are using to-day.

The many changes and rapid growth of English from the days of Chaucer down through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the present are presented with specimens selected from English prose and poetry, from the time of Chaucer to Macaulay. The closing chapter of these interesting data regarding the development of the English language from century to century is devoted to a survey of most English dialects at the present day.

The complete Index and the maps portraying the position of the Indo-European languages at the present day, and that of the English dialects in the fourteenth century, are most commendable and instructive.

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FRENCH PHONETICS.

Kortfattet fransk lyddaere til brug for laerere og studerende. af Kristoffer Nyrop. Med atbildninger. 120 pp. København: Philipsens forlag. 1893.

THE well-known philologist, professor at the University of Copenhagen, has rendered a great service to phonetists in general, who